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Spill

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Spill

First I thought it was my furnace:
a black metallic odor
seeping through the glass-block
window into the yard.
Then I guessed it started
under my car: a shimmery river
of darkness. Then I figured: my lawn-
mower. Did it blow a plug?
What was that weird smell?
Where were the plovers, the sparrows,
the terns? My eco-neighbor,
out watering compost worms,
said, "It's BP!"

And then I knew.

It's not BP. It's him. It's me.
We've been gushing bullshit
since Earth Day, 1970.
What to do? Write a poem?

Christ.

Rilke beat everyone to it.
He said, "You must change your life."

—Angela Sorby

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## STATEMENT

Frogs, because their skin is osmotic, are often the first to register the signs of environmental degradation: they grow extra arms or fail to develop eyes. Poets, like frogs, should be marking these changes as they occur. I don't think poets can change the world, at least not with poems alone, but we can be witnesses to its collapse, and maybe to its regeneration.

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Angela Sorby's books include *DISTANCE LEARNING* (New Issues, 1998); *SCHOOLROOM POETS* (UPNE, 2005), and *BIRD SKIN COAT* (Wisconsin, 2009), which won the Brittingham Prize. She's headed to Xiamen University, China, on a Fulbright next year, but mostly she teaches at Marquette University, in Milwaukee.